

**BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES**

Date: December 10, 2009

Meeting No: 105

Project: Improvements for Pedestrian Safety/BioPark Imagery

Phase: Discussion

Location: Proposed MLK, Jr and West Baltimore Street

PRESENTATION:

The meeting began with the introduction of the Planning Department's nine point urban design goals for the project. Jane Shaab, Senior Vice President of UMB's Research Park Corporation provided the project's background and pointed out the recent successes and enormous potential of the BioPark to the city and to the region. She further focused the discussion on pedestrian safety at this critical entry to the park and described a generous gift of Cherry trees to the University for the use at the BioPark or elsewhere in the city. She also indicated that a revised master plan for the BioPark would be shared with the Panel in the near future.

Charles Wilson of ASG Architects described the relationship of the project to the greater MLK environment and pointed out the key aspects of their proposal and the importance of seeking new expressions of connectivity across MLK such as the one at West Baltimore Street. He pointed out that Pratt Street and Saratoga Street raises similar challenges although Baltimore Street marks the connection to the BioPark and the heart of its medical campus.

Scott Huot of Floura Teeter Landscape Architects Inc. gave the background of the proposed landscape concepts for the project. The major objectives of the design team were described as follows:

1. Improve pedestrian safety;
2. Create an iconic gateway/wayfinding;
3. Reinforce strong connections;
4. Enhance circulation for improved visibility for pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles & Transit buses;
5. Increase visibility of the BioPark;
6. Change the setting to reinforce a gateway aesthetic.

The major elements of the proposed plan included eliminating critical turns at this intersection and opening up access to MLK at Fremont Street; extended sidewalk/crosswalk areas; new curbs, paving material and hardscape to improve the safety and security of the area; redesigning the bus drop offs; new Cherry Trees for the entire area including the traffic island of MLK; new major signing/sculpture opportunities and the elimination of a stand of mature oak trees that currently provide shade and scale to this section of MLK Boulevard.

COMMENTS OF THE PANEL:

The Panel discussed the elements of the proposed plan and reflected on the perceptions of the future role of important pedestrian crossings of MLK Boulevard like the one at Baltimore Street. The Panel agreed on the need to rethink aspects of the existing boulevard in the context of these critical re-emerging connections. It was agreed also that it is entirely appropriate to make changes regarding new street connections, eliminating auto and pedestrian conflicts, reestablishing new curbs and bus lanes and drop offs in order to address this currently stressed condition. However, beyond that agreement, there are several major concerns regarding other aspects of the current proposal:

- A. ***Landscape – Existing Oak Trees*** – Panelists expressed concern that the current landscape-based proposal represents “overkill”. The “overkill” aspect of the criticism reflects the unanimous concern regarding the elimination of the mature Oak trees in the major existing planting areas. While surface and hardscape improvements are certainly needed to the area (in terms of safety and visibility), the removal of most (if not all) of these mature trees should be avoided for as much as possible. The Panel feels strongly that these trees help establish edge, order, softness, shade and an appropriate scalar device for the urban design of both MLK and the surrounding BioPark buildings and would like to see them incorporated into any future design.
- B. ***Cherry Trees*** – Although, the gifted Cherry Trees represent an unusual and great opportunity, there was considerable concern that their size and form are inappropriate in civic scale and impact to replace the existing large Oak trees. The Cherry trees in the MLK median were thought to have good potential in demarking a change in the look of the Boulevard although the curving layout was deemed to be ineffectual.
- C. ***Baltimore Street Transit Shelters/Identity*** – The Panel agreed that the transit busses arriving and disembarking from this location are important to its identity and purpose. However, the elimination of trees or vertical landscape elements in this location was felt to detract from the potential of Baltimore Street’s sense of continuity as it passes across this critical place. Continuous weather protection, lighting, and monumentality might be employed in addition to seating and planting to reinforce the importance of this crossing promenade and Baltimore Street itself.
- D. ***Grand Civic Gestures*** – It was suggested that the project would benefit from bigger gestures that reflect the civic importance of this crossing. Gestures that may be seen by automobiles in advance of the actually crossing to visually forewarn them of slower traffic and announce an important pedestrian zone. These gestures might include environmental graphics, celebratory lighting elements, fountains, sculpture, flags, and/or changes in street material or textures but should broaden the palette of applications available.
- E. ***Full Visibility to Research Park Building*** – The Panel felt that the real scale and visibility of the actual buildings of the BioPark are not hampered by the existing trees and that the current condition reflects an almost ideal shaded urban landscape which should be valued.

- F. ***Identity/Signing*** – There was some concern voiced that this intersection should not be marked singularly as an entrance to the BioPark but more universally as the entrance to the larger community.

PANEL ACTION:

Since this presentation was provided for discussion purposes only, no approval was requested or given although the Panel has strongly recommended reconsideration and restudy of the proposed design.

Attending:

Jane Shaab – UMB BioPark
Charles Wilson – ASG Architects
Scott Huot, Shannon Early – Floura Teeter Landscape Architects Inc.
Kate McManus – UMB President’s Office
Ron Brown, Arthur Rose, Linda Cassard – UMB
Susan Williams, Brian Biddle – STV
Ron Kreitner – Westside Renaissance
LaToya Staten – DPOB
Ed Gunts – Sun
Paul Dombrowski – BDC

Ms. Eig, Messrs. Bowden, Britt, Cameron, Ramberg – UDARP
Tom Stosur, Gary Cole, Brent Flickinger, Gary Letteron, Wolde Ararsa,

Bob Quilter - Planning

**BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL**

MEETING MINUTES

Date: December 10, 2009

Meeting No.: 105

Project: Anderson Site Redevelopment

Phase: Introduction

Location: Maryland / 25th / Howard / 24th Streets Vicinity

PRESENTATION:

Donald Kann, of KANN Partners, along with Susan Williams and Jennifer Leonard of STV Incorporated, presented the draft master plan for the redevelopment of the former Anderson Auto dealership and miscellaneous other properties. The project is bounded on the north by 25th Street and Huntingdon Avenue, on the west by CSX Railroad tracks and Sisson Street, on the south by 24th Street, and on the east by Maryland Avenue. Howard Street passes through the middle of the site running north/south. The site has an elevation

drop of 30' – 35' from Huntingdon Avenue to 24th Street (west of Howard Street), and a drop of approximately 15' from 25th Street to 24th Street (east of Howard Street).

The proposed redevelopment of the site includes, west of Howard Street - a Lowe's on the south and west, a supermarket above it, a free standing pharmacy on the northwest corner (set back from Huntingdon), a bank that will be located in the existing Honda dealership building on the northeast corner of the block, and a parking structure (two levels covered and one on the roof of the structure). The top of the parking structure is approximately 4' – 5' above Huntingdon Avenue. A parking garage that is being converted to a storage facility, which is not owned by the developer, sits at the northwest corner of Howard and 24th Streets.

The block east of Howard Street is to be a mix of intermediate and small retail, 60 – 70 units of rental housing, and a two-level parking structure that takes into account the elevation change. Smaller retail uses will be incorporated into the existing showroom building at the SE corner of Howard and 25th Streets and along Maryland Avenue. Two intermediate-sized retail structures are located above the structured parking along 24th Street. The residential units are located above the retail on Maryland Avenue. The parking is located primarily in the center of the block and is fronted by the retail.

The primary points of entry are where Huntingdon bends to become 25th Street, on 25th Street west of Maryland Avenue, on Maryland Avenue, and on 24th Street, near Sisson (the primary entry to the Lowe's. There are also secondary and services entries on Huntingdon, 25th Street, and 24th Street.

To guide the master plan a series of urban design goals were established between City Planning and the development team. They are as follows:

- Establish a clear rationale for which street frontages are considered important to activate and which are less important and may accommodate secondary frontages;
- Establish project identification features at key pedestrian and vehicular entrances;
- Create open spaces that benefit adjacent uses and pedestrian activity;
- To the best extent possible, limit the public visibility of parking and loading areas and effectively screen those that are visible;
- Integrate and connect pedestrian and vehicular circulation with the existing neighborhood pattern and incorporate Universal Design to ensure accessibility for all;
- Relate the scale and architectural character of the project with that of adjacent communities;

- Incorporate a “green attitude” to the site in general and to parking areas and streetscape specifically – landscaping and trees should be utilized to the best extent possible;
- Consider increasing the number of residential units to create a truly mixed-use project.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

The Panel thanked the design team for presenting the project in its early phase, as well as the outreach that they have undertaken to the surrounding communities. The Panel welcomes the mixed-use approach to the site as well as the creative manner in which the design team has tried to utilize the grade change to minimize the impact of the big-box retail as well as the structured parking. However, the Panel feels that there are several issues that need to be addressed in order to effectively address the goals established for the project, including:

Establish a clear rationale for which street frontages are considered important to activate and which are less important. While the design team stressed the importance of 25th Street as an important retail street and connection to the Remington neighborhood, there is very little retail located along the street. Reusing the Honda dealership building does nothing to activate the street; instead the Panel felt that a new retail building should be located at the southwest corner of Howard and 25th that holds the corner and complements the existing retail building that will be kept opposite. Also, it was suggested that the retail extend further along 25th Street from the Maryland Ave corner. The Panel was also concerned with the depth of the retail on Maryland Ave. and the split between entrances from the street or from the parking court. Finally, concern was expressed about the amount of either blank or decorated walls that had no activity other than vehicular – in particular 24th Street, Howard Street, and the southeast end of Maryland Avenue.

Integrate and connect pedestrian and vehicular circulation. Vehicular circulation into and through the site was clear; however, pedestrian circulation to the retail uses was unclear if not minimal and difficult. Too much of the pedestrian access into and through the site has to pass through parking lots or across access drives, especially at Huntingdon / 25th Street. Given the size of the lots, the Panel suggests that the design team consider breaking up the lots into more appropriate block sizes by treating access drives and pedestrian frontage of the retail as “streets” that better integrate into the fabric and access of the surrounding neighborhoods. Additionally, the Panel was concerned with the inclined entrance drive off Huntingdon and the disconnect that this edge had from the pedestrian activity on Huntingdon, and asks that the design team look at how this can be improved as a neighborhood edge.

Create open spaces that benefit adjacent uses and pedestrian activity. There was discussion regarding the open space and “identification element” shown at 25th and Howard; it was felt by most of the Panel that this made no sense as a community space but that there might be an outdoor space along 25th Street west of Maryland that would be more of a plaza used by adjacent retail/commercial. More information is needed regarding the streetscape treatment – the Panel suggests a series of street sections at the next presentation. A “green” attitude should be extended to the treatment of the surface parking lots and the roofs of the buildings.

Relate the scale and architectural character of the project with that of the surrounding communities. While the initial presentation did not get into “architecture”, the intentions of the design team, in particular along 25th Street and Maryland Avenue, appear to be in the right direction. However, as previously mentioned, the Panel is concerned by the amount of street frontage that is either blank walls, parking structure, or screen walls. The Panel also questioned whether the existing stone building at the southwest corner could be incorporated into the project, given that its scale is compatible with the neighborhood to the south and that the adjacent proposed Lowe’s garden center could certainly benefit from the use of stone as wall and/or spatial-defining materials.

Finally, several members from the surrounding community made public comments regarding the project. Their concerns regarded the amount of blank walls along the edges, the height of the residential along Maryland Avenue, the lack of retail along Maryland Avenue, and access to the Lowe’s (recommendation being to have it off Sisson rather than 24th).

PANEL ACTION:

Introduction only – no action needed.

Attending:

Donald Kann, Shaw Rahman – Kann Partners
Susan Williams, Tony Corteal, Jennifer Leonard, John Mack – STV
Jon Laria – Ballard Spahr
Majid Jelveh – Shaw Jelveh Design
Kara Kunst – City Council
Nate Prett – AB Associates
Mackenzie Paull – DPOB
Leon Pinkett, Ben Stone – BDC
Ed Gunts – Sunpapers
Joan Floyd – Remington Neighborhood Association
John Dean – Maryland Avenue Business
Daniel Shub – SDYM

Stephen Gewirtz

Messrs. Bowden, Ramberg, Britt and Cameron – Panel

Tom Stosur, Gary Cole, Wolde Ararsa, Kyle Leggs, Gary Letteron, Jill Lemke, Lisa Morris, Alex Hoffman, Anthony Cataldo, Bob Quilter - Planning

**BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES**

Date: December 10, 2009

Meeting No: 105

Project: JH Student Housing (lots R9/10)

Phase: Continued Schematic

Location: 900 Block North Wolfe Street; Northeast Corner at Ashland

PRESENTATION:

Dennis Miller of EBDI and Ed Hodges, architect, reviewed the background of this project with particular attention to the original 2008 presentation, and revisions made subsequently in response to panel reviews.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

Members of the Panel commented as follows:

1. To question the extent of projections shown on the west façade. It was explained that some are 2', some 3' and some 4'.
2. To ask what is shown at the top of the building above metal and glass wall. The top level is to be a screen enclosing mechanical penthouses. It will be especially illuminated at night.
3. To see this presentation as more convincing than more recent versions. Improvements could be made at and above the entrance, with omission of the extended roof canopy horizontal band, at least in part, shown across the whole west façade. Projections shown would be more effective if more pronounced.
4. To recognize that the night elevation shown illuminated looks best as it shows more depth and contrast.
5. To recommend that the piers shown at ground level be centered on masonry wall above and be more substantial.
6. To express doubt about divisions vertical and horizontal between brick and metal fields that are currently shown half and half. The equal division seems uncomfortable; one material should dominate.
7. To recommend a darker, red brick in lieu of salmon shown.
8. To recommend as much relief and shadow at brick openings as possible.

PANEL ACTION:

Schematic approval recommended.

Attending:

Dennis Miller – EBDI

Scott Levitan, John Lecker - Forest City

Dawn L. Taylor - Otis Warren and Company

Ed Hodges - DiMella Shaffer

Magda Westerhout, Michael Blake, Sam Culpepper, Tim Offut – Mark Thomas Architects

Paul Dombrowski – BDC

Ms. Eig; Messrs. Bowden, Britt, Cameron, Ramberg – Panel

Tom Stosur, Gary Cole, Natasha Becker, Anthony Cataldo, Bob Quilter- Planning

**BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES**

Date: December 10, 2009

Meeting No: 105

Project: Sinai Children's Hospital Addition

Phase: Schematic

Location: Sinai Hospital PUD

PRESENTATION:

Rolf Haarstad of Hord Coplan Macht, project architect, introduced the Children's Hospital Addition project. It is the first phase of a new frontispiece and entrance area for the Hospital.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

The Panel was pleased with the phased approach to the hospital additions. It offered the following comments and recommendations:

- 1) This addition is the forerunner of the future hospital, and as such it should provide a strong design that represents the intended design of the completed project. Therefore, it is critical that the design for this addition, although small, be carefully conceived.
- 2) The design should offer a clearly defined motif that is an appropriate baseline or springboard for the design work for the rest of the project. This can be achieved by focusing on a clear geometry, rather than using a variety of forms.

- 3) The design of the exterior landscape concept and the interior public areas should be coordinated so they work as a unified feature that organizes the visitor experience and use of the hospital campus. The main angled access “corridor” should read both inside and out. Wayfinding should be accomplished as part of the design, in the arrangement of spaces and landscape, and not be totally dependent on signage.
- 4) The entry vestibule is too tight and should read more obviously as an entry point. More attention is needed for all entry points.
- 5) Care should be taken to avoid rooms looking into interior space.
- 6) The special-ness of the projecting “special piece” should be reinforced by better integrating it into the interior floor plan. The room should read more as part of the user experience, with visual connection through the space from entry points, and not just as an appendage.

PANEL ACTION:

Schematic Approved.

Attending:

Rolf Haarstad, Brantley Davis, Tim Barnhill – HCM
Barbara Gilbert – Life Bridge Health

Ms. Eig; Messrs Bowden, Ramberg, Britt and Cameron – Panel
Wolde Ararsa, Anthony Cataldo, Bob Quilter - Planning

**BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES**

Date: December 10, 2009

Meeting No: 105

Project: Solar Panel Canopy- Science Center

Phase: Discussion

Location: Inner Harbor (Key Highway Area)

PRESENTATION:

Van Reiner of the Maryland Science Center introduced the project by providing a history of the Science Center’s use of solar arrays. Mike Bolinger, architect with WBCM presented the proposal.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

The Panel offered the following comments and recommendations:

- 7) Construct only one line of panels in the parking lot.
- 8) Place the panels as close as possible to the face of the building at the entry.
- 9) Arrange the panels so that they relate to the entry door and entry “court.”
- 10) Raise the panel structures to the highest level possible.
- 11) Expose the structure of the panels (including connections, etc.) as much as possible.
- 12) Make every effort to place the panels so as to provide a visually interesting arrangement.

PANEL ACTION:

Discussion only - no action required.

Attending:

Van Reiner - Maryland Science Center
Eric Giosa, Eric Barnes – Constellation
Michael Bolinger, Phil Carroll – WBCM
Mike Purten – Gipe Associates
Ed Gunts – Sunpapers
Paul Dombrowski, Colin Tarbert, Ben Stone – BDC

Ms. Eig; Messrs. Bowden, Ramberg, Britt and Cameron – Panel
Gary Cole, Wolde Ararsa, Bob Quilter – Planning

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES

Date: December 10, 2009
105

Meeting No.:

Project: Loyola University Corner Addition
Schematic

Phase:

Location: North Charles Street at Cold Spring Lane

PRESENTATION:

The existing buildings at the corner are 50+/- feet back from existing curb lines. There is currently an entrance to the campus quad from the corner as well as a six foot high stone wall with a sign identifying the University. The entrance path/stairs rise 25+feet above the corner under a multi-story sloped glass wing into the internal quad. The wing is to be razed and the Donnelly Hall addition expanded into the space connecting the two

buildings and closing the entrance. The two buildings are both stone with vertical curtain wall glass strips.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Panel members expressed the following concerns:

1. The Addition at the corner is an unresolved confluence of the two existing buildings.
2. The Architect may consider making a clear statement between an independent building of its own, or an extension of one building or the other.
3. The entrance on Cold Spring Lane should be more defined in the wall that joins the addition to the existing building.
4. The site planting should be pulled together and made a whole rather than three separate elements.
5. The quad-facing side of the addition should relate to adjacent similar conditions.
6. The roof is neither consistent with existing nor an expression of its own.
7. Proposed street trees should be located closer to Cold Spring Lane.

PANEL ACTION:

Schematic approval withheld.

Attending:

Joan Flynn – Loyola University Maryland
Earl Purdue, Ann Powell – ASG
Carol Macht, Om Khurjekar – HCM
Tom Trosko, Philip Der – WBCM
Ed Gunts – Sunpapers
Paul Dombrowski - BDC

Ms. Eig; Messrs. Bowden, Ramberg, Britt and Cameron – Panel
Gary Cole, Brigitte Fessenden, Anthony Cataldo, Bob Quilter - Planning